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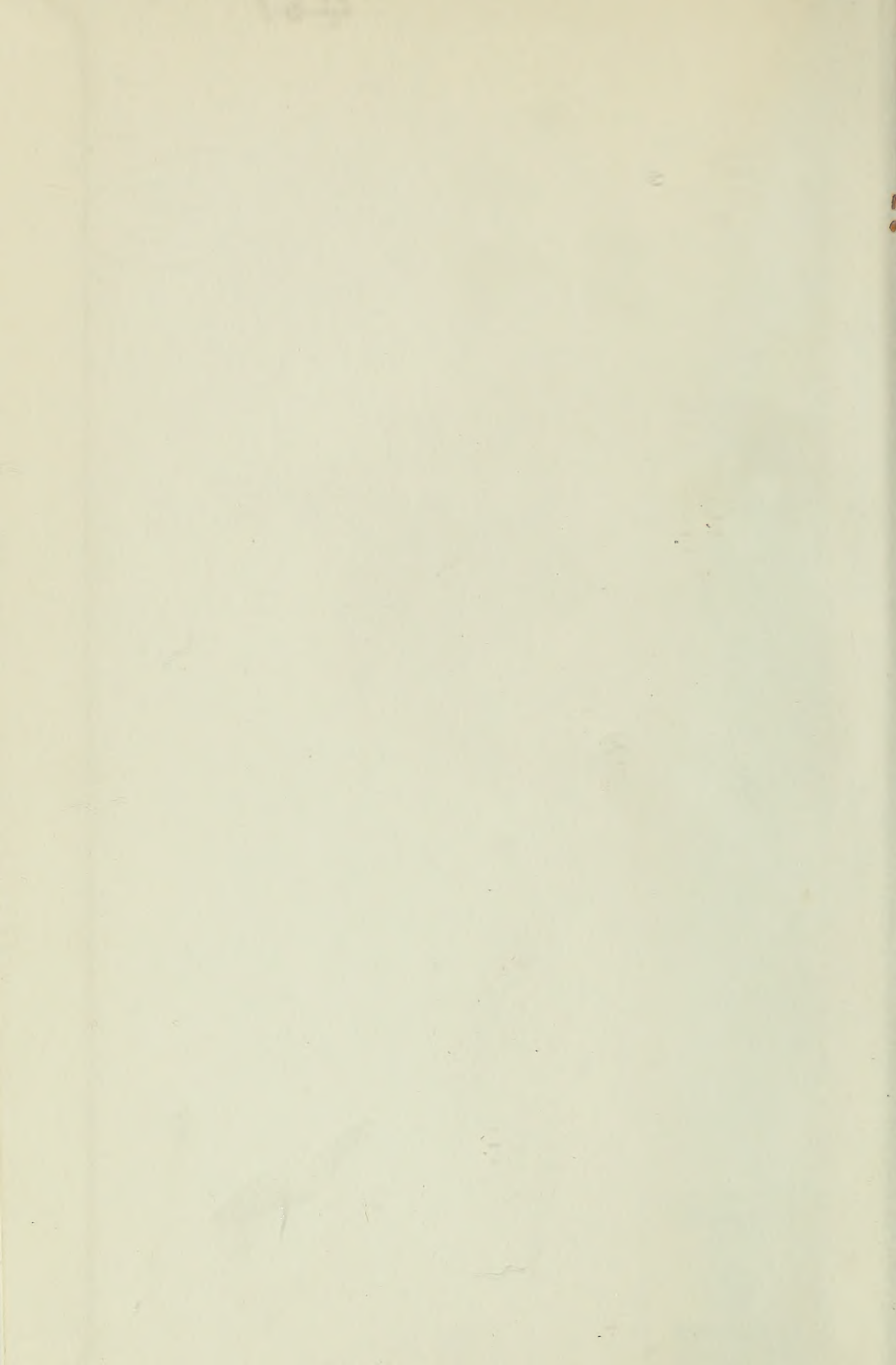
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461

IN THE TOWN

I

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A

*By the same Author.*

THE LOIRE.

WAYS OF ESCAPE.

DREAM CITIES.

IT'S AN ILL WIND.

ON THE ROAD : A BOOK OF TRAVEL SONGS

62.161

# IN THE TOWN

*A Book of London Verses*

By  
DOUGLAS GOLDRING

170449.  
12.4.22.

London  
SELWYN AND BLOUNT  
27 Chancery Lane, W.C.  
1916

Twenty of the verses in this book are now printed for the first time, a few have appeared in magazines, and the remainder are taken from an earlier volume called "Streets."

PRINTED BY THE WESTMINSTER PRESS  
411A HARROW ROAD, LONDON, W



*This great grey city that bred me and mine—  
Supreme, mysterious, dirty and divine—  
Is made up all of contrast, light and gloom.*

*It has green hills and parks where flowers  
bloom ;  
And shadowed pathways where young lips are  
shy  
And warm hands tangle while the night slips  
by ;  
Deserts of humble brick, resigned and drear ;  
And crowded centres, full of light and cheer ;  
Thronged streets where jostle theatre and hotel,  
And stately terraces where rich folk dwell . . .*

*It has black alleys, and most dismal plains  
Crossed by long, steady, fire-emitting trains ;  
Foul slums and palaces, prisons and spires  
And suburbs where the jaundiced clerk expires.*

*But love and hope are always with us, too :  
And such bright eyes, to make the sky seem blue!*

*All of my life I have spent up and down  
Adventurously, in this unending town,  
And magic things have seen at Fortune Green  
And fairies loitering in a grove at Sheen ;  
Chelsea made crimson in the sunset's glare ;  
The dawn transfiguring even Russell Square. . .*

*And I have watched, all through a summer's  
day,  
The brown-winged barges loaded up with hay,  
And seen the heavy cargo-steamers slide  
Past Woolwich Ferry, with the flowing tide ;  
Found joy in travel on a motor 'bus,  
And glowing worlds Within the Radius !*

*And so, for songs, my heart must needs repeat  
The cries and whispers of the London street.*

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## VILLAS

All down Acacia Road there are small bow windows  
Jutting out neighbourly heads in the street,  
And in each sits, framed, a quiet old woman.

These watch the couples who pass or meet,

And some have borne sons, now ageing men ;  
And most have seen death in their narrow house ;  
Heard wedding bells for their grandchildren ;  
Seen boys seek the bar for a last carouse ;

And heard wives cry, through thin plaster walls,  
And watched babies laugh in the sun, outside.  
They treasure things up in their withered old hearts,  
And always they sit looking out, with eyes wide.

These queer old women, they watch, as they sit  
Through the whole long day, what happens beneath :  
They miss not a thing. Sometimes they knit,  
And sometimes dream a little, holding their breath.

1910

## II

### KINGSLAND ROAD, N.E.

*As I went walking down the Kingsland Road  
I met an old man, with a very heavy load ;  
He had a crooked nose, and one tooth in his head,  
And as I went by him he stopped me, and said:*

I'm an old, old man  
With a very heavy sack—  
But when I was a young 'un  
I'd a heavier pack.

Now my eyes are all dim,  
But my heart's full of fun ;  
Oh ! heavy was my heart  
When my eyes were young.

I'd a cartload of trouble  
All along o' my wife.  
—It was trying to be *happy*  
Made a Hell of my life !



I'm an old, old man  
With a gert heavy sack—  
But when I was a young 'un  
It nigh broke my back !

*When I looked in his eyes I found that they  
were blue,  
And the skin of his face it was wrinkled through  
and through.  
He had big hairy ears, and his beard it was  
white :  
And twittering and laughing he passed into the  
night.*

### III

## CHERRY GARDENS

*(Rotherhithe.)*

My man fell in, when he was drunk ;  
They'd thrown him out o' the " King's  
Head."

From Wapping stairs he fell, and sunk.  
He was my man ; he's dead.

On the cold slab, a sight to see,  
They've laid him out—poor handsome  
chap—

In Rotherhithe's new mortuary.  
His head should dent my lap,

But I mayn't warm him where he lies,  
Because I have no ring to show ;  
Yet I've his bruises on my eyes :  
And bore his child a month ago.

## IV

### MARE STREET, N.E.

In Mare Street, Hackney, Sunday nights,  
My Jim he'd search for souls to save :  
Beneath one of them showman's lights  
He'd stand up white and brave.

" And who's for Jesus now ? " he'd call,  
" And who's for Love that's strong ?  
Repent, believe : there's Heaven for all  
That turns and flees from wrong . . . "

I wish no harm to my poor Jim,  
But God strike Lizzie dead !  
'Twas cruel of her to lead the hymn,  
With me laid ill, in bed.

They're gone—last month—to Leytonstone ;  
Jim runs a chapel there ;  
And I'm left hungering here alone,  
While *she* joins him in pray'r.

V

LIVING-IN

(*Brixton Rise.*)

Through the small window comes the roar  
Of all the world of light outside :  
It is not midnight, yet our door  
Is shut on us, and we are tied.

What is he doing now—my dear ?  
I left him all on fire for me :  
Will he be true ? Oh God, I fear  
He'll buy what I would give him free !



## VI

### THE SPANISH SAILOR

Through lines of lights the river glides,  
Bestrewn with many a green-eyed ship,  
And swiftly down the slinking tides  
All night the heavy steamers slip.

Bright shone the moon when he slunk down,  
A-sailing to some foreign parts,  
Past Greenwich and past Gravesend Town  
And caring nought for broken hearts.

'Twas in July. He kissed and fled :  
He stole my all and slipt to sea,  
And now I wish that I was dead  
—Or that his arms were crushing me.

## VII

### WALWORTH ROAD

Dreams fairly haunt the Walworth Road (S.E.) ;  
Ride on the bonnets of the passers-by ;  
Slide down the chimneys, and fly in between  
Warped, weasened doors and well-worn lintel-boards ;  
Come in at windows and invade small rooms  
To chatter archly in old women's ears,  
Making them laugh cracked laughter, deep in the  
throat  
And weep with sweet, long, memorable thoughts. . . .

They make bent grandfathers recall the day  
They played the fool in the sun, under the sky,  
And were the deuce with women, and finer chaps  
“ Than ever you get, in these degenerate times. . . . ”

And then, they love to hover where maids sleep,  
Stirring the dewy lashes of soft eyes,  
Dimpling warm cheeks and parting tender lips.  
And in small ears, half-hidden in tangled curls,  
They tinkle such sly secrets of delight

That, when the sun cries "shame" to slugabeds,  
These wake, cooing like doves, with little trills  
and laughs  
And memories of a kiss, in that dream world  
Where "he" had swapped his bowler for a crown,  
And was a prince, and rode a great white horse ! . . .

To the strong lads they whisper of the wars,  
Of glory and red coats ; or of bright waves  
Tumbling, a foam of white, over a ship's dipped  
nose,  
In some tumultuous, splendid, sun-bathed sea ;  
Or of adventures, where the world is warm  
And palm-trees stand above a glittering beach  
Under deep skies ; where you may chance to meet  
Paul and Virginia ; or an Arab horde—  
Slave-traders all, with muskets damascened—  
Or talk to small brown girls with nothing on. . . .

Again, they tell of Rovers, from Sallee,  
With pistols in their belts, who cry "Hands Up,"  
But get a punch in the nose from British boys,

Who steal their long feluccas with tall sails,  
And go adventuring through the burning blue,  
And meet a flight of porpoises and a dolphin,  
And make an island (as the daylight fades)  
Which has a fierce volcano in her midst  
And a little white port, with clustering white  
houses,  
And pirate vessels in her anchorage. . . .

They are brave tales you broider, elfin dreams !  
Yet when the dawn awakens shining eyes,  
The same brown trams are surging to the Bridge,  
The same thin, grimy trees stand looking on ;  
Nothing is changed. But oh, the day would be  
How dead without you !—in the Walworth Road.



## VIII

### SPANIARDS'

The moon shone withering, wild and white,  
And ruddy gleamed the bars,  
And far below, the city's light  
Streamed up to meet the stars.

“ Look down,” ses Jim, “ them streets that  
shine,  
And look, the gaudy sky !  
By God, to-night, my girl, you're mine ”  
—And glad enough was I.

Oh, why did blow so soft and warm  
That breeze on Spaniards' Road !  
I never thought to take no harm,  
Nor bear so hard a load.

1913

## IX

### IN THE PARK

He sighs "O Lord, this clammy fog  
Which cloaks them gravely-staring trees,  
It makes one shiver like a dog!"

"Harry, you *are* so hard to please.

"See how the stars begin to shine,  
And twinkle through the fading mist;  
In half an hour it will be fine,  
And how they'll laugh to see me kissed!"

"O yes, the stars stick grinning on—  
But they don't make life better fun;  
They'll grin when we are dead and gone,  
They'll grin till love and life are done;

"And we're their blessed joke, my girl,  
Who toil to snatch this moment free  
From London's endless, grinding whirl  
To dream and long and love and *be*."

## X

### PROMENADE : LEICESTER SQUARE

Like sweet princesses, stately, with soft glance,  
Faint smile thrown backward and a questioning  
eye,

The insolent beauties capture and entrance  
Pleasure's weak worshippers, or pass them by.

Lonely among them is an alien face—  
Less calm, less dignified, but no less fair—  
A mouth whose corners droop with their  
disgrace :

O tarnished gold, and glory of despair !

## XI

### SUBURBAN THEATRE

(*"A" Company*).

Crash, boom and bang—the final chorus ends,  
The applause breaks out, and now the curtain  
drops :

The weary violinist joins his friends,  
The tenor grumbles, as his face he mops.

The audience hurries out, whistling or glum:  
The chorus ladies drink, behind the scenes,  
Their long-awaited beer. Ah ! soon she'll  
come

Through the stage door, by which the porter  
leans.

Soon will she come to me, her little face  
Nested in furs, and she will take my arm,  
And we shall hurry from this frowsy place :  
O, and her heart and lips and cheeks are  
warm !

1909

## II





## XII

### STREETS

Church Street wears ever a smile, from having  
watched bright belles

Coming home with young men, after balls,  
“ at all hours.”

Its villas don't mind ; they say, “ Go it, young  
swells,

We've been young too ! ” But Ebenezer Street  
glowers.

Chapel deacons live here, with side whiskers and  
pompous wives,

Who play hymns on Sundays, and deeply  
deplore sinful acts.

They're convinced that their neighbours lead  
scandalous private lives ;

—That you and I ought to be shot, “ if one  
knew all the facts.”

Goreham Street's sad. Here lives old Jones the  
poet—

He knew Swinburne and Watts, and has letters  
from "dear Charlie Keene."

Loo Isaacs lives here as well, and poor Captain  
Jowett :

And the "Goreham Street Murder" was over  
at number thirteen.

(Ah ! graveyard of hope, street of death and foul  
night,

Where the sun never peers and the days are a  
prelude to Hell :

—Street of "rooms" and cheap scent, and of  
broken-down drabs who invite

Their Bloomsbury loves to its terrible  
Temperance Hotel.)

Now George Street (E.C.) strikes a cheerful and  
strenuous note ;

It is full of *live* men of business, of 'buses and  
noise ;

Of Surbiton gents, very sleek, in top-hat and fur  
coat ;

And earnest young clerks who perspire, and take  
classes for boys.

But *Hertford Street* has a calm and a gently  
fastidious air !

Here I shall live when I'm rich, with my wife  
and my car :

When we are pleased, we never shout nor ruffle  
our hair,

And a lift of the eyebrow will show how  
annoyed we are.

This is where life is lived nobly and sweetly and  
well :

Here are beauty, all hardly-won things, and  
courage and love.

Why people worship the slums and the poor so, I  
can never tell,

For it's virtue and baths and good cooking go  
hand in glove !

## XIII

### LITTLE HOUSES

(*Hill Street*).

Little houses, though prim, have often a secret glance  
That can speak to a heart outside—as *one* speaks to  
me !—

And even their close-drawn curtains seem to enhance  
The charm of their sly reserve, of their mystery. . . .

I like to walk through the Square to your quiet street,  
And look at your windows—with just a suspicion of  
pride—

For I may go in, when I dare, and sit at your feet,  
But the people who pass can't guess what it's like  
inside.

They haven't a notion—but *I* see your small armchair  
And your dog, by the fire, and your novel thrown  
on the floor ;

And I know there will always be flowers when you are  
there,

And always a smile for me, when I open your door !



## XIV

### SHE-DEVIL

*(Davies Street).*

White arms, Love, you have, and thin fingers with  
glittering nails,  
And the soft blue smoke curls up from your  
parted mouth !

The delicate rose of your cheeks never varies nor pales,  
And your frocks and your furs are perfection—  
devourer of youth !

It is thrilling to think of your room and you, wicked,  
inside—

Adorable snake, with a snake's unflickering eyes,  
And an intimate smile (to share which, fools have died)  
And lips soft as a girl's and like a siren's, wise !

Devourer of youth ! You are never alone by your fire,  
You have always a boy there, who thinks you a  
goddess, ill-used,

And adores you with passion, and brings you the gifts  
you desire—

And the fiercer he burns, Dear, the better he keeps  
you amused !

## DINNER TIME

*(Sloane Street).*

The lamp gives a softened glow that is like a caress,  
And the fire gleams cosy and red in the open grate,  
Warming your bosom and neck and your shimmering  
dress ;

And the people begin to arrive, for it's five to eight.

I'm not very near you at dinner—it wouldn't be wise—  
And nobody dreams of the things that we say, you  
and I,

When suddenly, both together, we lift our eyes  
And agree that the wine is a triumph, and not too  
dry. . . .

Fine wines and fine jewels, white linen and beautiful  
frocks,

Kind glances and musical laughter and delicate food !—  
And my tie's well tied, and I'm pleased with my black  
silk socks ;

Is it earthy of me to find these good things good ?

## XVI

### MRS. SKEFFYNGTON CALHUS

Mrs. Skeffyngton Calhus has three sons killed in the  
war,

(But to see her brave, sweet face you would never  
guess it).

She has "given" some nephews as well, and cousins  
galore :

"And if one feels sad," she says, "one ought to  
suppress it."

She belongs to two Funds, some Committees, and  
several clubs

Where she states what she's done for England, with  
modest pride ;

And she works like a black at recruiting, outside the  
pubs ;

And is always ready to tell "how her dear ones  
died."

There were three of them—Bob, Jack and Arthur  
—handsome men ;

So good to their mother, so courteous and brave  
and kind !

Well—she bred them for England ! It was God's will. Amen.

For her sorrow on earth, a reward in Heaven she would find.

But Lily (the third from the left in “ The Beauty-girl's Glide ”)

Belonged to no clubs or committees, wasn't noble at all ;

And the night of Jack's death, in the wings, she broke down and cried

'Till her face was a sight and she couldn't go on for the Ball.

*She* hadn't bred him for England, nor looked for rewards “ up above ” ;

He was all that she cared for on earth ; and she railed at Fate

And called down a curse on those who had slain her love.

The “for England” touch she couldn't appreciate.

But Lily, of course, was only a simple soul.

She lacked Mrs. Calhus's exquisite self-control.

1915

## XVII

### THE YOUNG MARRIED COUPLE

(*Muswell Hill*).

The home of the young married couple is  
pleasant and clean,

They receive me together. They say " Will  
I please come in,"

And " not mind " some small thing (which  
I have not seen).

Then : " Dinner is ready now," and  
" shall we begin ? "

They have a small daughter, and not too  
much money. They say

That things *must* look up, by and by. They  
are merry and brave,

They have grey days and bright days and  
days of play ;

And they always enjoy together the things  
that they have.



And often I envy my friends, as I sit and  
read

All alone with my books and my thoughts,  
without child or wife:

And I think I should like to marry very much  
indeed—

If only the marriage sentence weren't *for*  
*life*.

## XVIII

### MAISONNETTES

*(Harrow Road).*

The houses in Windermere Street are "let  
off in floors,"

Which perhaps is the reason it always  
seems so to "swarm."

Little groups of girls and young men gather  
round its front doors

And keen eyes at all windows observe who  
is "coming to harm."

Everyone in the street knew at once about  
poor Lizzie Brown !

They saw the young chap she took up  
with, and "knew how 'twould be" ;

And they know why the blinds of the house  
at the corner are down,

And *who pays the second floor's rent, at a  
hundred and three.*

## XIX

### HOME

O, my dear, I have wandered afar and seen  
marvellous places,  
And foolish light loves have consumed me  
and left me as dead,  
(Bored stiff with their bleat, and big eyes,  
and their "flower-like faces"),  
So now I've come back to be good—with  
a tired head. . . .

The candle flames smile in long lines and the  
flowers are your choice,  
And our friends are much nicer than ever  
we thought them before !  
And now, in a lull in the talk, I can hear  
your voice—  
And the rain outside, and the long street's  
muffled roar. . . .

## FRONT DOORS

*(Bayswater).*

From Notting Hill to Hyde Park Square  
The streets have an inhuman air,  
The houses—(six imposing floors ;  
Dark, formidable, fierce front doors ;  
Tall windows, sightless, sealed and blind :  
Ball-room or billiard-room behind)—  
Must shelter, they're so vast and cold,  
None but the ugly and the old. . . .

Watch, as you wander hereabout,  
The people who go in and out !  
Sleek-bellied men in varnished hats,  
Fur coats, black trousers, gleaming spats,  
Flock in procession, pompous, grand,  
Or drive in motors to the Strand ;

And massive women, towering high,  
Dart glances from a hawklike eye,  
Pause, sniffing the post-luncheon breeze,  
Then drive (to train for several teas),  
Snub the companion, pat the dog,  
Sneeze, cough and grumble at the fog.

Jerusalem no more golden is  
Than gloomy Bayswater, I wis !  
Her portals strike an awe profound—  
“ Fly, loiterers, this is holy ground !  
Quell impropriety of tone ;  
Hawkers and circulars begone ”—  
For here the ruling race reside  
And guard our pledges and their pride.  
Her doors are sour : they never smile,  
But icily stare for mile on mile—  
Vast, supercilious, gleaming, hard :  
Fastened securely, bolted, barred !



## XXI

### DILLETANTE

(*St. James's Street*).

Mr. Reginald Hyphen is terribly "one of us,"  
He was born with a mouth just made for  
a silver spoon,

(So the Butler locks up the plate when he  
comes to dine.)

The thought of the Middle Classes makes  
him swoon,

And he never will dance unless he is sure of  
the wine—

And O, it was such an affair, when he took a 'bus!

And yet he's not only a butterfly, carefully  
smart,

He *thinks* a great deal and has a devotion to Art.  
He has read some Meredith too—"Rather  
neat in its way"

And perhaps, if he's time, he will "do some-  
thing like it—some day."

## XXII

### MERVEILLEUSES DE NOS JOURS

(1914)

“ We will now call on Alberic Morphine to  
give us a reading ” . . . .

The rows of young women look up ; their  
eyes glisten ; they shiver  
With the kind of emotion that's really *very*  
misleading.

All have fine eyes, yellow faces, vile clothes  
and a liver.

They smoke a great deal, bathe little, and  
wear no stays ;

Their artistic garments are made on the  
Grecian plan ;

They flock in their crowds to the latest  
“ poetic ” plays ;

And aspire to a union of souls—with some  
pimplly young man.

## XXIII

### MR. HELLIS

Mr. Hellis (the Thinker) reviews with the pious  
elation

Of one who's *performing a duty* that's quite unsought.  
He likes to talk of "we men of the younger  
generation,"

And belongs to a club called the Leaders of Modern  
Thought.

As an "earnest layman" his responsibility is intense,  
For he feels that "we" and the "Woman of the  
Future" alone keep alight

The New Morality's lamp. His influence  
In his powerful critical organ is *for what's right*.

For instruction to youth in the methods of sound  
composition,

He has thoughtfully published some trifles—a play  
in two scenes,

Church History, some verse, and an essay on  
Ibsen's position

Re Woman (her place), which explains what the  
gentleman *means*.

## XXIV

### BENEVOLENCE

Mrs. Murgatroyd Martin thinks only of doing good :  
That is all that she lives for—to succour the *poor*,  
*poor*, poor.

She wants them to lead nobler lives (that is  
understood) :

To the world of Culture she opens them wide a door.

She tells them of Pater and Pankhurst, of Tagore and  
Wilde ;

Of “ Man-made-laws ” and the virtues of proteid  
peas ;

Of Folk-Song, and Art and of sterilised milk for the  
child :

Of the joys of the Morris Dance, and of poetry teas.

And when the vile husbands get tipsy, on Saturday nights,  
She goes round next morning and gives them a piece  
of her mind,

And rouses the downtrodden wives—and when this  
leads to fights

And black eyes, and bad language, she says : “ But  
I *meant* to be kind ! ”

## XXV

### RITZ

(July, 1914).

White teeth, neat black moustache and lovely  
eyes—

Face bronzed and beautiful, like a young god—  
Tired Rollo is the dreaming school girl's  
prize.

He leans against the wall, perhaps will dance  
If they ask *very nicely* : sweet young things !  
He's "an observer," and he can't conceal  
He's frightfully bored with all this sort of  
crowd.

He prefers artists, men of genius ;  
He has a soul above the idle rich—  
"A looker-on, you know, at the world's  
game."

Rude persons laugh. Adonis, rather hot,  
Twirls the ineffable moustache and smiles.  
—He is so much that other men are not !

1914



## XXVI

### IN A TAXI

Come, give your hands to me, and lean  
Your dear bright head against my coat.  
Let me tear loose the furs that screen  
The ivory column of your throat

And yield your hungry lips to mine,  
You passionate child ! You cling so tight,  
The blood goes to my head like wine,  
As we race, breathless, through the night.

How the time flies ! We're nearly there.  
Now grow sedate and proud once more—  
Put back your furs, bind up your hair,  
But pause, awhile, outside your door.

No one can hear ! So now, goodbye !  
Darling, to crush you, in the gloom,  
With kisses, would be ecstasy . . .  
“ Shh ! mother's moving in her room ! ”

1908

## XXVII

### THE SUBALTERN SOLILOQUIZES

In this cold ditch, with frozen feet  
And stomach turned by filth and stink,  
If one can only dream, it's sweet  
To lose oneself and think . . . and think.

By gad, but they were fun, those days  
—They seem a thousand years ago—  
When we were setting town ablaze  
And danced, and wenched, and thought  
things slow !

Those kisses in the warm June nights,  
And O ! those dawns by Prince's gate—  
Champagne and sunshine, loves and fights—  
Who guessed that they would end in  
“ hate ? ”

Well, now they're gone, I'm only glad  
I made things jolly, while I could !  
To face the music ain't so bad  
If, while you had it, life was good.

1915

## XXVIII

### OUTSIDE CHARING X.

(2.35 *p.m.*).

Of course she's there to see him off—  
Trust her for that ! Tears in her eyes, enough  
to be becoming,  
The latest furs, then sympathy, for tea !  
And if he's hit, my own, she'll hear it first.  
She'll be the one to fly to France,  
To bore the Doctor and the Nurse  
And drive him mad—if he still lives.

But I, who love him so my heart grows faint,  
Who'd gladly bleed to death to save him pain,  
Must wait and read the news in some blurred  
list . . . .

Then, ever the grinning mask, day in, day out !  
While she, hard as a stone,  
Wears stylish black and tells her lover's son  
How " Father died a hero, in the War ! "

1915

## MALISE—ROBES

The address is good—10A North Molton  
Street—

I'm clever at the trade, and doing well ;

Haven't a single cause for discontent !

Wilfrid is pleased : I'm safe : why mourn  
(you say)

The old days when I loved him, and was  
poor ?

Ah, why ! Fool, fool—to ask one *that* !

I love him still, I think. Sometimes he comes

And takes me off to Paris for a week ;

Flatters himself I'm " doing well at last " ;

That he's not brought me harm ; but, rather,  
good.

It *ought* to be enough ! And yet, and yet—

You see I'm thirty-five, and I've no child. . .

True, I've the shares in " Malise Limited,"

And that's worth fifteen hundred solid  
pounds a year. . . . .

I'll marry my Paris buyer. He's a good sort :  
And we'll soon be very rich. . . . But I'm  
so tired.

I wish he'd only kept me in a flat  
Somewhere in Maida Vale ; come once a  
week  
And let me cook the dinner. . . . Votes !  
Good God,  
The way to manage women is the Turk's . . .

But Wilfred's such a little gentleman ! He  
can't forget  
He didn't find me in the streets, but in the  
saddle  
—— years, years ago ! out with the Quorn.



### III



### XXX

#### WEST END LANE

Off through the dripping, moonless night,  
Up West End Lane and Frogna! Rise,  
They trace their footsteps by the light  
Of love that fills their weary eyes.

“ Nellie, though Town’s a tiresome place,  
With far less joy in it than tears,  
To set my lips to your warm face  
Is worth a sight of dismal years ! ”

“ And I’m so happy, Jack, with you,”  
She whispers softly. . . . “ See, the rain  
Has stopped, the clouds are broken through,  
The stars are shining clear again ! ”

Pausing, they gaze across the Heath  
Submerged in fog—a dim hush’d lake  
Wherein the wretched might seek death,  
And lovers drown for dear Love’s sake.

Then clasping hands, and touching lips,  
They dream beneath great sombre trees,  
Whence large and solemn-falling drips  
Are shaken by the restless breeze.

“ Oh, nothing’s half so sweet, my dear,  
As kisses in the quiet night :  
Lean close, and let me hold you near,  
Put out your arms, and clasp me tight !

“ Why should we wait, so cold and wise ?  
We’re only human, Nell, we two ;  
And even if love fades and dies—  
I shall remember this : won’t you ? ”

## XXXI

### HAMPSTEAD

#### i

Up from the desolate streets—the green, sweet hill !  
    (All crossed with scented paths, shut in by garden  
    walls  
And hung with shadowy trees—dark paths and still).  
    O, open plateau, glittering pond, and love that calls !

Here, ah ! here, to be gods, to forget !  
    Here to leave home and troubles that soil and blear.  
Under the golden moon, when the sun has set,  
    Here to forget and kiss—O joy bought dear !

#### ii

I love those small old houses, with bright front doors,  
    And shy windows that look on the Heath ; they are  
    quiet and gay :  
Old books, old silver they have (that my heart adores !)  
    And their women are slim, with soft voices ; and kind  
    things they say.



Their lives are one exquisite tea—with the lamp unlit,  
In autumn and winter. In summer a rose  
Climbs in through the open window, caressing it ;  
And always there are *petit-fours*, music, and dreams  
—and repose.

iii

Fields where the ugly, with divine-grown eyes,  
Bloom all to beauty of sweet look and word.

Trees, amorous trees, that fold maternal arms  
Over joined lips, and halting vows half-heard.

iv

Do you know Branch Hill ? There are steps to the right  
When you reach the top, which climb to a walk  
Shaded by elm-trees of great girth and height ;  
And there are seats there, where lovers talk.

And all in front is a valley, wide and deep—  
In summer a place of murmurs and laughing sighs :  
In winter a sea of mists and deathly sleep,  
Pierced by faint sobs and drowning, desolate cries. . . .

It rained, the wet poured from the leaves ;  
 They by the churchyard ; entered in  
 And sheltered underneath the eaves ;  
 So sweetly close : yet firm her chin.

Her warmth, her fragrance, thrilled his blood ;  
 And she—half frightened and half kind—  
 Whispered the warning words “ be good,”  
 But left his venturous arm entwined.

When the shower stopped his hopes sank low,  
 —Farewell kind walls and darkling spire !  
 They walked forlornly down Church Row ;  
 Her eyes grown big ; his lips on fire.

Down Frogmal Lane to Fortune Green—  
 There parted, by a watery moon.  
 His heart went throbbing “ Might have been,”  
 But hers a-trembling “ Not too soon.”

At Jack Straw's Castle, streaks of yellow light  
 Pour from the bar upon a preacher's head  
 Who howls unheeded warnings to the night :  
 Two p'licemen say he ought to be in bed.

Lonely young men walk, eager, to and fro  
 And search the passing faces—some find mates ;  
 Against the railings leans a giggling row ;  
 An amorous chauffeur puffs his horn and waits.

The crowds move up and down, white dresses gleam ;  
 Some strolling niggers play a tune that trips,  
 While couples meet and glance, and leave the stream,  
 And youths look plaintively at young girls' lips.

So, to the Pines. Ah, here, in the hush'd blue  
 You may spy cities, dim in the dim sky,  
 Stretching strange roadways to the inner view.  
 See ! See !—oh, loved one, see ! Hope *shall* not  
 die. . . .

## XXXII

### RICHMOND PARK

#### i

What do I want with your little, shrinking love ?  
See, I have a star in my hand, that I snatched from the  
blue above,  
I have the moon under my arm ; and dreams in my  
heart, that cry  
And, look, the glow of my city, my home—like blood-  
red fire in the sky !  
*You* cannot bind me with cords, while you give or  
withhold little kisses,  
I will fly off and forget. . . .  
Ah !

#### ii

How can you tell ? you say—your heart cries “ wait ” :  
You will not answer now, it grows so late—  
And I stand, hungry, by your small, green gate !  
Dear, if you would but trust love’s whispered word !  
Listen a little while—you turn away.  
What ? Your head droops. . . . You are frightened !  
Run in and hide. . . .

## XXXIII

### TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Have you not seen, emerging from the Strand  
On warm-breathed evenings when the sun has set,  
How, suddenly, you come on fairyland,  
And sly Romance has snared you in her net ?

How gay those trooping girls are—eyes how bright—  
Who hurry across the crowded Square to meet  
The boys who wait them, in the lingering light :  
How sweet to hear their little tapping feet !  
They have no time to watch the sky above,  
For all the world, to them, is life and love.

Only the passionate dreamer takes delight  
In the great pageant of the approaching night,  
Who, striving, caged, to burst his spirit's bars,  
Laughs at the flushed green sky, begemmed with  
stars.



## XXXIV

### LODGINGS

As I climb these musty stairs,  
To my garret near the roof—  
Past the ladies singing airs  
From the latest Opéra-bouffe—  
I can see her little feet  
Twinkling in the brilliant light,  
I can hear the words so sweet  
That said for my delight,  
When the whirling dance was over  
And she joined me in the night !

As I climb these hard-worn stairs  
To my garret near the roof,  
All her pretty, subtle airs,  
As she kept me half-alooof,  
Fill my thoughts and banish cares ;  
I can hear her soft reproof  
When I kissed her unawares,  
As I climb these weary stairs  
To my garret near the roof.

## XXXV

### ESCAPE

The empty months fly past ! Let us start,  
    you and I,  
Down the road that stretches its long white  
    line to the sky  
And laughs to think of the broad hills and  
    the sea  
It can bring to you and me !  
O my love, let us leave this little street  
That leads not anywhere ;  
With its futile little houses, its terrible folk—  
Let us dare to be free !  
And out in the world—in the hush of the  
    wood—  
Under the careless heaven let us make our  
    bed,  
Where trees are kind overhead,  
And bright stars bend to look . . . .

## XXXVI

### THE QUARRY

All down that dismal villa'd street,  
With ugly green front-doors,  
I'd to and fro, on tiptoe feet  
And wonder which was yours !

And when the bedroom candles shone  
And night fell deep and dark,  
The road would fade, and I'd press on  
Across some faery park.

And you before me, you so near !  
—Elusive, 'mid the trees.  
I the bold horseman, you the deer—  
What nights, what dreams were these !

Must Love and Beauty always fly  
The eager arms of men ?  
Oh, I shall hunt you till I die,  
And when I live again !

## XXXVII

### EAST SHEEN

So here's your home ! Why, something of you  
flashes

Still, through the rain and mist.

The houses new and pink—green doors, green  
window-sashes—

Fade in the thought that here it was we kissed,

Under that puny tree ! (The street lamp's glare  
Mocked at the ageless moon—the same whose beams  
Laid all the loveliness of Helen bare  
And shone on Cleopatra's hungry dreams,  
And made a road of silver down old Nile,  
Maddening her lovers to their lovely end,  
Who, having loved her, slew them with a smile,  
Proud to have looked on what you showed them,  
friend. . . . )

Now from the little street the moon is fled,  
Covering her face with veils of trailing cloud.  
All's mist and rain—but you awake in bed,  
I by your door, and two hearts beating loud !







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